4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

Games.—They play a kind of *bao* with sixteen holes; they put three small stones in each hole. The boys play a kind of hockey with a wooden ball.

Upon return from war about two out of every three cattle go to the chief; the chief then divides his share of the cattle with his brothers, and a man who has distinguished himself in war is given a reward of cattle by the chief. A man who distinguishes himself in war is also often given a wife without payment.

Food, etc.—They eat practically all meat except that of the hyæna. Some young men eat leopard meat to make them brave in fighting; the meat of a serval cat is not eaten. The women do not eat fowls; some women do not eat sheep and eggs; some eat hippopotamus meat, some not; women do not drink milk, but eat it cooked with food. They have a curious custom of mixing cow's urine with the milk of the cow; the urine is allowed to stand a day or two to increase its flavour; they say it increases the amount of the butter and gives it a nice flavour, and it is moreover supposed to have a medicinal effect. The crested crane (*Balearica pilleata*) is never killed or eaten by these people.

Medicine, etc.—They pierce the chest until the lung is reached for chest complaints, and they even sometimes cut a small piece out of the lung through the aperture. They have medicine for wounds and for arrow poisons, also for abscess and for purging, but not for diarrhœa. They also have medicine to avert a threatened miscarriage. They profess to have a certain antidote for snake poison.* Venereal disease is practically unknown among the Ja-Luo.

Before going to war they often eat the outer seed case of a certain tree, and this is supposed to ensure their return unwounded; it is called *Odudu*.

Peace ceremonies.—They kill a sheep and put part of it into a wooden mortar used for crushing grain, and the representatives of each side take out a piece and give it to the opposite side. An old man from the side that is beaten will go to the village of the chief of the enemy and pretend to creep up the cattle boma; this will be accepted as a sign of submission.

Killing animals for food.—They kill cows by sticking a knife into the jugular vein; the head of the beast must be pointed to the west during the operation. Sheep and goats are killed the same way. Fowls are strangled.

Succession customs, etc.—When a man dies the property goes to the brother if the children are small; if the eldest son is grown up he takes the property and gives his brothers a share; but a son is not allowed to take the amount paid by anyone who marries one of his sisters; this amount all goes to the father's brother. The brother of the deceased takes the wives, but the eldest son will probably take the youngest wife of his deceased father.

* After considerable difficulty I obtained specimens of the plants said to be used as antidotes for snake poison, and Dr. Rendle, of the Botanical Department, British Museum, has kindly identified the plants for me. One plant, named *Physalodon Hispanicus*, is used internally, an infusion being made from the leaves. The other plant, *Spermacoce pedicellata*, is used externally, a plaster of the macerated leaves being placed on the wound. I have not been able to discover the physiological action of these plants.

peppers flies. Small rods made from a tree called Osire are used by children. A dried piece of cotton stalk is used as a float. Nyawire, Nkiire, Omoge, and Sire are caught in this way. The bait used is Onyombo or a piece of groundnut. Long lines, Mugundo, with a large number of hooks are sometimes used. These are left in the water for some time with floats at intervals to buoy them up. 226 227

FISH USED FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION.

As most of the fish caught by natives is not eaten fresh, but dried, the whole of the population of these locations could easily eat fish caught on the Lake shore. In fact there is no doubt that dried fish is transported and eaten by the natives very much further inland than these Lake shore locations. The whole Jaluo population of Central and South Kavirondo will eat fish if they can get it. The population is approximately as follows:— 251 242 [141]

Central Kavirondo	316,000
South Kavirondo (Luo)	180,367

The two Districts which border on the Lake shore in Nyanza Province are Central and South Kavirondo. The natives living close to the shore in both these Districts spend a large part of their time fishing. It has been estimated that about two to three thousand in each District are more or less permanently employed in this work. They use canoes (Dhoko, Tiyi) made of rough boards sewn together with grass fibre and caulked with mud. There are probably about 1,000 canoes in each District (Central and South Kavirondo). They are propelled with single bladed paddles (Ngat). 24 [501]

The following are the names and population of the Locations in these two Districts which actually border on the Lake shore from the Sio River on the Uganda border on the North of the Gulf to Mokuru on the Tanganyika border on the South side:— 361

CENTRAL KAVIRONDO.

Name of Location.	Population.
Samia	23,000
Kadimo	6,000
Sakwa	18,000
Uyoma	11,000
Asembo	19,000
Seme	26,000
Kisumu	13,000
West Kano	19,000
Nyakach	25,000
	180,000

8:Shaw G-5 (ca. 1930)1932 FL11 Loo FL11

grandmother then hung the bird, still alive, round the neck of the girl. Hanging there it was then killed, and immediately afterwards removed by cutting away the lower part of the beak through which the string was passed, leaving this portion still hanging round the girl's neck. The bird was afterwards roasted and eaten by the men in the *dala*.* After the fowl had been removed the girl put on a small apron about six inches square made of strips of leather hanging free from a supporting strip decorated with beads and cowrie shells. Aprons of this kind were manufactured by a man whose special trade it was. The beads on it were made of *mukonga* and the apron itself of cow-hide. The apron given to the bride was not a new one. It was borrowed for her from one of the bridegroom's married sisters, and she took it away with her and wore it until he sent her a new one of her own. At the same time she put on a small "tail" of cotton fibre. This tail, like the larger one worn by married women, was known as *chivwa*, and the plant from which it was made was called *tuwa*. If there was no fibre ready in the *dala* from which the *chivwa* could be made, a fresh supply was gathered after the girl's arrival, and the *chivwa* was constructed by a woman married either to one of the bridegroom's full brothers, half brothers, or to one of his first cousins, i.e. to any of the men whom he called "brother." The small *chivwa* was presented to the bride by the bridegroom, who first, however, gave her a goat. This goat (*ikowa chivwa*) was in turn presented by the girl to her best friend who had accompanied her from her home and who was expected to remain close to her side until she returned to her mother's care. The bride wore the small tail until certain cattle, known as the *dala yaku ungimba* (the cattle of the casting away of the *ungimba*) were paid to her father. She then took off both the *chivwa* and the *ungimba*, and they were burnt. I did not, at the time, enquire into the motives and beliefs underlying this ceremony, as enquiries of this kind made through an interpreter seldom have any satisfactory results, but the ceremony is obviously a *rite de passage* marking a stage in the girl's progress from the virgin state to that of a married woman. After the night in the *simbu* hut she was no longer entitled to the name of *nyako*—a maiden—but was referred to as *mwike*—a bride—a designation that was applied to her until she finally left her father's *dala* for that of her husband.

After these ceremonies she was next took to her home with her companions and to the accompaniment of the songs and mysteries I have already described (*ante*, xxv), taking with her a goat given her by her father-in-law. This goat was called the *ikowa kwendwa* because it was decorated for the journey with fastoons of the *mungu* called *kwendwa*, which was also used in this way on other occasions of rejoicing. The goat was given to the girl by her father who could

* Women were forbidden to eat fowls (or sheep) for fear that if they did so they would commit adultery (*ante*, xxv).

8: Shaw G-5 (ca. 1930) 1932 FL11 Lee FL11

585 bride. It is a curious fact that only young men (youngmen-bachelors) may eat this part of the animal. The elders told me that in Gum, Alago, Sumo, Ugoma, Amonde, Kadima and Ugonya the breast is set aside to be eaten in the early morning by the friends of the bridegroom. But in Kasa, Kasama, Nyakach, and Kabondo it is used as I have described.

One fore-leg and one hind-leg were sent to the parents of the bride, and two small pieces of the liver were also allotted to them. The rest of the liver was eaten by the elder men living in the dala, and the lungs, heart, and stomach were divided and disposed of in the same way as the liver. The thick part of the stomach was also the perquisite of the elder men, who also ate the contents of the small intestine mixed with blood and used as a relish. This concoction was called kothori and was highly esteemed. Half of it was sent to the bride's father. [84]

Here again there was a difference between the customs of Alago, Gum, Sumo, Ugoma, Sakwa, Kadima, and Ugonya on the one hand, and those of Kasama, Kasa, Nyakach, and Kabondo on the other. For in the former districts kothori was eaten by men and women, whereas in the latter districts only the men were allowed to eat it. This difference may well provide an interesting clue to the past history of these two divisions.

The lungs was divided into two parts, one being sent to the bride's parents, and the other half being eaten by the parents of the bridegroom. The ribs and loins were the portion of the women guests, who were also allotted the kidney and the pancreas which men are forbidden to eat, for fear of contracting the disease known as kydrocele. Women with child may not eat these portions in case the child is a boy. [Dei 753]

585 591 After the lungs was over the girl was regarded as having finally passed into the fully married state. But even so there were still certain ceremonies which had to be observed before she could take up her residence in her own hut, specially built for her by her husband and there assume the normal duties of a married woman.

The building of this hut was never begun until the wedding feast was over. While it was being constructed the girl slept first in the cow-hut, and later in her mother-in-law's hut, and before it was finished the girl returned to her own home for a short visit, taking with her that part of the hind fore-leg of the bull (*had pachuru*) which had been set aside for her mother at the wedding feast, as well as other presents of food. It was explained to me that these gifts were in the nature of a compensation to the mother for her absence from her daughter's wedding feast, and they may indicate that in earlier times it was the custom for the mother to accompany her daughter on that occasion. While the girl was at home the mother prepared a

585 [84]

19: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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constant activity in the field and home. The freedom with which the young women mingle with the men is striking. They may be seen among them, leaning on their shoulders when standing, as unrestrainedly as the men with men. The absence of clothing in no wise embarrasses them nor does it cause either sex a moment's thought; they are accustomed to this state of nature from childhood and feel no constraint in mingling freely together. They are extremely fond of ornaments and of painting themselves with different coloured clays, and often make patterns upon their bodies which they retain until the clay wears off. Their hair is often allowed to grow long, and youths frequently increase the length of it by twisting cords into it, greasing the whole with castor or other vegetable oil and rubbing red clay into it. Men and women mix freely together and often work in parties on the same field, singing songs as they work and keeping time with their hoes as they dig. Their homes in the hills are exposed and cold. Still, they do not appear to feel the cold winds and move about and work as freely as well-clothed tribes. As a tribe they combine agriculture with pastoral pursuits and their diet consists of milk and vegetables.

Origin of the tribe. According to their traditions they come from the north-west. Their ancestor Ramogi, they say, had seven sons named Kwonda, Nyakal, Owado, Nyadwer, Sakwa, Alego and Laughe; and he adopted another son, Upenya. Laughe, they say, is the father of the Maasi and Sotik tribes. They trace their own descent from Owado who had two sons, Omwa and Sagam. We thus have two groups forming the tribe, as follows: Omwa, whose descendants formed eight clans; Sagam, whose descendants form seven.

The descendants of Omwa:

1. Dongo	2. Nyatte	3. Owado
4. Kwamudi	5. Nyamwegi	6. Ndalo
7. Openya	8. Nyadwal	

The descendants of Sagam:

1. Pwonja	2. Hadodi	3. Waranja
4. Ratang	5. Wango	6. Monya
7. Nyamodo		

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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Industries.

241 **Agricultural pursuits.** Agriculture is the principal pursuit of the people and they have now become dependant upon their crops for the grain which forms their chief food. Millet and maize are grown freely and are ground into flour for making porridge. Men and women work together in the fields and dig them for the seed. They use the common hoe with a long handle when digging, and roughly hoe the ground, when rains are expected. Sweet potatoes, beans and sesame are grown more for change of diet and as additions, such as we should call savouries, to the porridge than as necessaries of life. When [302] the crops are a few inches high, the chief and all his people shave their heads, and from that time till harvest no one is allowed to shave again. After harvest the headman shaves and all the people follow his example. Should any one neglect this custom and shave before the time, it is said to be injurious [303] to the crops and to prevent the grain from ripening. The culprit is therefore fined for his heedless conduct. When the corn is in the ear, a goat is killed and the contents of the stomach are scattered about the field to prevent blight and to preserve the crops from being injured by hail-storms.

231 **Cow-keeping.** Cows form the principal wealth of the people. The numbers vary in a village according to the pros-234 perity and success of the community. Milk is used as an article ●[242] of food, especially when sour and clotted, but it is more of a luxury, in the present progressive stage of the tribe, than a necessity; and the meat of the animals is almost entirely reserved for ceremonial use. Cattle are herded by boys and [442] young men, who mix their herds and flocks of goats and sheep. Women and girls are strictly forbidden to herd or to milk cows; they may churn and wash the milk-vessels, but there their duties in connection with cows end. Each village has its cattle, and the young men and boys of the place are responsible for their safety during the day, while they graze on the hill-side. 234 When a cow calves, the calf is left with the dam during the first ten days and the cow is not milked. On the morning of the eleventh day the cow is milked and the milk is churned, the

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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butter being used for cooking a special meal which is eaten by the owner of the cow and his wife; a little of the butter is set aside and they smear it on their lips, but some of it may be smeared on their bodies. After the meal has been eaten, the cow is milked regularly and the milk may now be drunk by all the family. 234

Oxen used for riding. Oxen are frequently used for riding. The young men train the animals to this and ride them constantly. They turn them as they wish by prodding the side of the animal's cheek with a stick from which it turns away. The animals are trained, however, to obey the voice rather than wait for the stick. They trot along at a fast rate and cover the ground quicker than a man can walk. 242

Sheep and goats. Sheep and goats are kept by all villagers. Goats especially are eaten by men and women without any restrictions. Fowls are also kept, though, as is usual among most African [illegible], fowls have to find their own food, and their chickens are constantly preyed upon by hawks and kites, and those that grow up are of a poor and miserable kind. 231 243

Building.

Architecture and mode of building. The houses are round huts with conical thatched roofs. They have an outer wall of stakes three and sometimes four feet high with mud smeared over them on the inside and a central pole passing through the roof, to which the rafters are attached. The roof is thatched with grass and the end of the central pole, which passes through the roof, is roughly carved. The houses are grouped together, leaving room enough to pass between them, and a growing fence surrounds them. Many villages have no outer fence, but are built high up the hill-sides for protection from hostile clans. 342 344

Religion.

Religious beliefs. Apart from worship of the dead and a belief in ghosts, the people have little religion. They call the supreme being Nyasi, who, they say, is to be found in large trees. In times of trouble or sickness they make offerings to him of an animal which is killed under a large tree, and the [771] 776 782

[949] couple of women who have come to assist her, support her shoulders. If the woman is afraid or weak, somebody generally a strong woman is called to *thurgiz* her, i. e. she puts her mouth close on the mouth of the patient, and blows her breath down the patient's lungs in order to increase the pressure.

No sooner the child is born or one of the assisting women ran out of the hut to pull out of the roof a piece of kalliveeru stalk, which a split having a sharp edge. This is used to cut the baby's navel after it has been tied off.

If the baby is a boy the Kalliveeru stalk is pulled out of the roof on the side of the fire place of the hut *(Kor anuch* — leftward side facing the hut). If it is a girl, the stalk is pulled out *Kor ulang* — the right hand side. Compare: Burial of children (p. 274).

When the afterbirth has come out the mother takes the child on her lap, while somebody runs for a drop of fresh sheepmilk — otherwise *sarap vaikuvanil* — which the child has to drink. Nor until the child has swallowed a drop of this will the mother give the child suck.

[94] Immediately after the birth of the child the husband orders a goat to be killed for the mother, and the pot is put to boil, for the mother has a ravenous appetite. Now word is sent to her father, who will kill a goat for his wife, who comes to see her daughter, bringing some of the meat and fish along.

For no purpose except nature's call is the mother to leave the hut within 4 days, if the baby is a boy. Then she takes the child outside, and a little patch of hair is shaven above the ears of father, mother and child.

After 10 days a hut and a kolsi are tied, meat and fish is cooked, smoke is pounded and mixed with rendered butter, and the lot of it is to provide a good feed for the inhabitants of the kraal later in the day. On that day the heads of father, mother and child are shaven clean. Then also the woman is smeared [952] with butter and sprinkled with smoke ends, seedlets of a wild plant *(arkal)* are strung on plaited grass *(ayangu)* and creeping grass *(marthan)* and hung [953] crosswise over the shoulders and under the armpits of the young mother. In the same way she is ornamented with coconutshells, ordinary beads, beads of seashell-water pieces of ostrich eggs *(vel)* and big iron beads.

[954] When the woman is thus ornamented, a boy, her brother-in-law, is called to hold the child. Now an old woman brings *avvial* (= pounded smoke mixed with rendered butter) and cooked meats. She kneads a mouthful of the food, making with her thumb a little pit in it *(athuvaya vinaga)* which she fills with *avvial*, then she puts it on the end of a wooden ladle, used in stirring the food, it takes to the mouth of the mother. The bit now she puts it with the help of the ladle in the mother's mouth, who is not allowed to touch the food with her hand. After she has eaten this one mouthful, another mouthful is given in the same way to her young brother-in-law who holds the child.

Then meat, fish, blood and other food is brought for the inhabitants of the kraal. Then night the father and mother of the child sleep again together for the first time after the birth of the child *(ripputu vada vyatti)*.

If the baby is a girl the women stays in the hut for 5 days, after which the child is taken outside and a little patch of hair is shaven also above

13: Odede 1-5 (no date) 1942 FL11 Luo FL11

LUO CUSTOMS WITH REGARD TO ANIMALS (WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO CATTLE).

By Walter Odede,*

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THE IMPORTANCE OF STOCK TO THE LUO.

The Luo are both pastoral and agricultural people, and so any discussion involving a group of young and old men with regard to the relative importance of animals and crops usually results in an endless debate. As a rule the view is unanimously held by the elders that animals are more important to them than crops; but the young men will often support crops, because since the advent of Europeans to the country the Government has introduced cash crops which are easily grown and marketed to obtain such articles as clothes, soap, lamps, etc. The elders on the other hand support their argument by saying that during a very bad famine poor people die unless they become the servants of cattle-owners who live comparatively normally during hard times. They urge that children brought up in homes where there is plenty of milk grow up fitter and more handsome than those in homes where there is only grain. Again those who stress the importance of animals, go so far as to say that women in poor homes develop scaly backs. Poor homes for the Luo are homes where, no matter how much grain is stored, there are no cattle, and women usually run away from such homes. Strictly speaking, the word "rich," when used by a typical Jaluo, signifies a man with a large number of stock.

The chief animals owned by the Luo are cattle, goats, sheep and poultry. In discussing the importance and uses of these animals to the people of this tribe it would probably be better to take each of them separately.

Cattle produce milk which is a valuable and nourishing food and which has other important uses besides being drunk as such. From it the Luo make butter which is used by women and old men for anointing their bodies. Besides this, butter can be turned into ghee which is the favourite animal product used in cooking. Fresh or whole milk is not drunk by the Luo unless it is mixed with a little soumuk or buttermilk which has been treated with cow urine. The reason why the milk is not drunk pure is because it is believed that this practice is the cause of human tapeworm infestation. Women and girls who have passed the age of puberty do not drink milk. Stored

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buttermilk is used for making gruel which can be consumed by both sexes. Both buttermilk and fresh milk are used for cooking vegetables and fresh bovine blood for human consumption. The Luo do not slaughter their cattle for beef except for some special reason, for example, on the occasion of a special feast. The ordinary meat eaten is that of animals which have died as a result of disease or accident. If there is an outbreak of a serious disease and many animals die, their meat is made into biltong which can be stored for future consumption. Such biltong forms a very palatable diet when properly cooked with ghee. Girls do not eat the meat of cattle paid for their dowries.

Hides are used as sleeping mats, and for making shields, drums, sandals and special head-dresses on which ostrich feathers are fixed. Those of very young animals are used as clothes.

Cattle can be exchanged for millet or maize at any time, i.e., during famine or in good years; but cattle-owners tend to refuse millet or maize for their cattle after good harvests. This is one of the facts which support the argument of the Luo elders who prefer animals to crops. In exchanging cattle for goats and sheep, a bull is worth three to four goats and a heifer, six to eight goats or sheep. A goat or sheep is worth six to eight fowls.

The young men use young oxen for riding, and they sell heifers to buy buffalo hides for making shields or ostrich feathers for their adornment at funeral dances. Cattle accompany the mourners when attending funerals and, during inter-tribal wars, oxen were the companions of warriors on the battlefield. The horns make valuable trumpets and are used as containers for keeping powdered drugs. Tendons make strong strings for harps and bows. Cattle dung is useful for smearing houses and dry dung is good for the fire. Fresh blood as mentioned above makes a palatable food when mixed with milk and cooked. The scapula of small animals is used as a butter-scoop and for other domestic purposes. Hoofs are used for storing drugs and for running liquid medicines into the noses of both human and animal patients, e.g. an infusion of a plant known in Luo as *ponderum** is given in this way to cattle suffering from east coast fever. The long hair of the tail is used for trapping birds. The scrotum forms a valuable pocket.

Goats' milk is the food of the herd-boys when looking after animals in the pastures. They add the juice of a fruit† to the fresh milk and after a few minutes the milk coagulates and is ready for consumption. Goat skins are worn by both men and women and goat's meat is eaten by both sexes. The goat is the animal usually slaughtered for female visitors such as mothers and sisters-in-law. The chief produce from sheep is mutton

*Gallichum sp. probably *D. Maldivarii*.
†*Solanum* sp. probably *S. incanum*, Sodom apple.—Errors.

which is only eaten by men and young girls. Women despise sheep saying that they are the most foolish of animals and remark that their meat has a horrible odour. Poultry are placed by women in the same category as sheep because they eat dirty things, e.g., excreta and some ugly insects. 231 262

There are certain parts of a cow which are usually only eaten by special groups of people, e.g., the kidney and the abomasum are reserved for girls, the brisket and the abdominal muscles which originate from it for young men, the tongue and the hump for old men, and the diaphragm for those who take fresh blood from cattle for human consumption.

Cattle and goats are the chief animals used for the payment of dowries. Sheep are seldom used for this purpose because every girl believes that if a sheep is paid for her dowry it means that she is despised by her sweetheart. Sometimes this is enough to break off the marriage. The number of cattle paid for a dowry is usually between fourteen and twenty-four. More cattle are paid for the daughters of rich people and chiefs because these girls will, during their wedded life, take much property to their husbands: property collected during the frequent visits they pay to their fathers. 231 583 [554] [431]

In the course of paying a dowry, discussions go on between the father, uncle, full and step-brothers of the girl as to who will receive some of the special animals paid for her dowry. The same applies in the case of the payment of the dowry by the man, for although the father is responsible for paying most of the cattle, he is helped by some of his uncles and brothers. 583

The first eight to twelve cattle paid, three to five of which are females, are taken by the full brothers of the girl. Sometime after this payment has been made the girl is caught in the morning by relations of her sweetheart who take her to him. From this day the girl is known as *miahe* (the bride) and the husband as *wuon kisera* (the bridegroom). In the afternoon of the day on which she is caught, her sisters follow her and stay with her at the bridegroom's home for a night, after which they return to their own home early in the morning. The bride is left with one of her girl-cousins who stays with her until she is brought back to her home so that payment of special cattle for her different relations may commence. The first eight to twelve cattle which were paid before she met her husband are not special cattle because they can be inherited by any of her full brothers. Sometimes in the morning of the first night that the bride stays with the bridegroom, her sisters-in-law (the wives of her brothers) go to the bridegroom's kraal and choose a bull. This bull is inherited by the bride's eldest brother. About two weeks after the bride and her cousin have been at the bridegroom's home, her father slaughters an ox and the meat is taken to the bridegroom's house, some cooked 583 585

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Loc FL11

blocks on the upper part of the arm. The wooden blocks are coloured red with oxide of iron. A band strung with small pieces of wood of the same colour is sometimes worn round the forehead. Some of the married men wear a semi-circle of ivory on the forehead, made of the split canine teeth of the hippopotamus. (The teeth, however, I am informed, is not split, but ground down until it is only an eighth of an inch thick.) Others wear the tusks of a wart-hog. The Ja-luo men, like most of the tribes of Nilotic origin, frequently adopt a curious stork-like attitude, standing on some hillock or ant-hill on one leg with the other leg bent and the sole of the foot opposed to the inner side of the knee of the leg on which the body is poised. They usually wear sandals of leather when travelling.

The Ja-luo live mainly by agriculture. They cultivate sorghum, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, ground-nuts, pumpkins, tobacco, and hemp. Salt is made from the ashes of reeds. They eat practically all kinds of meat except the hyæna. Young men eat leopard in order to make them fierce in war. The crested crane is universally protected, and is never killed. The women do not eat fowls, and some women do not eat sheep or eggs. Some eat hippopotamus, and some refuse that meat. Women do not drink milk, but eat it cooked with food. They have a disagreeable custom of mixing cows' urine with the milk of the cow. The urine is allowed to stand a day or two in order to increase its flavour. The people say that this admixture increases the amount of butter in the milk. They like the flavour, and think that it has medicinal value. They kill cows by sticking a knife into the jugular vein. The head must be pointed to the west during the operation. Sheep and goats are killed in the same manner. Besides the flesh of fowls, cattle, sheep, and goats, they eat large quantities of fish, which they obtain from the rivers, and, above all, from the waters of the Victoria Nyanza.

Cooking is done entirely by women in earthen pots inside the hut or on the verandah, and the food is served in little wicker baskets. Father and sons eat together in a little separate hut which has open sides. Women eat separately from the men inside their own houses.

They do not *hunt* much with dogs, but catch a good deal of game in pitfalls. They will also attack the elephant with spears. Fish is caught in the Victoria Nyanza by means of large, conical wicker traps called "dema." The process is as follows: They bring two very long ropes, one end of each of which is firmly secured to the shore. One rope lies, weighted, along the bottom under the water, the other floats on the surface, but from it hangs a fringe of papyrus stalks. The two ropes above and below correspond with its other, and are connected at intervals with strings to ensure their correspondence, while the fringe of papyrus

16: Northcote C-9 (no date) 1907 FL11 Loc FL11

THE NILOTIC KAVIRONDO.

By G. A. S. Northcote.

101 The Nilotic Kavirondo, or Jaluo as they should more properly be called, who inhabit the north-eastern shore of the Victoria Nyanza, belong to the same family as the great Dinka tribe of the Soudan and are near relations of the Alur and Acholi tribes which live on both sides of the Nile near Wadelai, the differences being far less marked than those between two adjoining Bantu tribes usually are.

174 In all probability, therefore, the Jaluo originally formed one tribe with the Acholi. What their reasons for migration were cannot be ascertained, but probably it was due to overcrowding or to a dispute about the chieftaincy. The natives themselves can throw but little light on the matter: they state that they came from the north-west under one big chief and that when they again became too numerous they split up into smaller chieftainships. The fact that they lay stress on their again increasing numbers points to the conclusion that overcrowding

[134] was their motive for migrating; but as will be seen later, they use sorcery as their chief weapon against an unpopular chief. Had they been driven out by conquest there would be abundant traces of such a cause, but no such signs are visible.

192 In appearance the Jaluo are a fine race, not so much remarkable for beauty of face as for stature and development. They are a large-boned and deep-chested tribe, somewhat flashy and very muscular. They present a great contrast in this last respect to the other Nilotic tribes in British East Africa, the Masai, Nandi and Lumbwa. All four are capable of great endurance, but none of the last three named can claim to be a muscular race. The superior physique of the Jaluo is probably

•[245] due mainly to their agricultural and industrial habits and to the fact that their food is mainly vegetable, while up to the great cattle plague of 1892, the Masai, Nandi and Lumbwa lived entirely upon animal food.

Facially the Kavirondo have rather squat noses, large mouths and big wide-opened eyes. The everyday dress of the men consists of a goat skin hung over the

241 right shoulder, or of nothing. In most cases they have quantities of iron wire on

[30] their legs and arms and strings of beads round their necks. The women are usually completely nude, except that married women wear a small grass tassel behind, hanging from the waist; latterly, however, they have taken to wearing a strip of cloth round the waist about six or eight inches in breadth and only just meeting in front.

[51] The tassels are discarded when a woman's husband dies and cannot be again worn until she is re-married. It is significant of the respect which the Jaluo have

19:Wilson E-5 · (ca. 1950) 1960
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583 injured and not subsequently death results. Indigenously the
642 method of resolving this situation is to cancel the arrangements of the wedding which was to have taken place and to continue these arrangements to marry a girl to the dead man. If the dead man is from the party of the prospective groom, the girl is married to his name. If the death has occurred among the relatives or friends of the girl, then a bride is chosen from the relatives of her prospective husband to marry in the name of the dead man. Wherever possible, this custom is followed today. The authorities, however, naturally prosecute in cases of this kind. The result is usually manslaughter, and the sentence is a light one.

642 There are cases in which it is difficult to determine whether the death was caused intentionally or accidentally. For example: a food which is now becoming increasingly used is the
● [249] cassava root, and raw cassava contains cyanogenic glucoside which, when acidified by gastric fluid, forms hydrogen cyanide and is therefore a virulent poison in this form. Adequate cooking destroys this poisonous principle, and most Lau women clearly understand this. Therefore, when the death occurred of a child who had consumed cassava which had been prepared and given by a co-wife, its mother's suspicion was immediately aroused. She accused the co-wife of giving the poison intentionally. It is very difficult, however, to prove, as in the case mentioned, that death was caused intentionally and not accidentally by the ignorance of the co-wife. The case was dismissed by the court.

584 The sequel, however, was that the husband did not accept the explanation of ignorance and divorced the woman because, as he stated, "there would never be peace in my village. It is obvious what this witch has done and although she has been a good wife to me, she has broken my village and killed my child. I therefore will divorce her and get my cattle back to marry some woman who is not a witch."

20:Ominde 1-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
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I

INFANCY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

Feeding

Under one year. For the first month of a baby's life its chief food is its mother's milk. But when the mother's milk is insufficient, gruel may be given as early as at two to three weeks old. Although cow's milk is now sometimes used instead of gruel, it is still chiefly regarded as a modern introduction by the missionaries in an effort to promote infant health. [153] [177] [197]

Between the ages of one and three months, gruel and breast-feeding play about equal parts. When the mothers go out to work, suckling tends to be limited to mornings and evenings. The average age at which babies are given gruel is one month. From the third to the sixth month milk from the breast and gruel continue to form the child's main diet, but after this, gruel begins to prevail over breast-feeding. Although maize flour is occasionally used in the preparation of gruel, the usual flour for this purpose is obtained from sorghum and eleusine, a species of millet. Whenever possible a little sour milk is added to the mixture. Between five and six months certain children have frequent tastes of adult food given to them by their nurses. [262]

Although nurses are allowed to give gruel to the children, difficulties in handling a baby sometimes result in under-feeding, which is often made worse by the low food-content of the gruel itself. Through training by nurses, babies are accustomed to adult food before their mothers actually give it to them, so it can happen that [154]

20:Oninde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

and fast rule can be placed on the time of the temporary termination of the marital relationship, it is generally left to the good sense of the men and women concerned.

The regulation of the diet. Here again the restrictions aim mainly at minimizing the chances of the child being too big, thus rendering it easier for the mother to give birth. Among the foods which women normally eat, bananas are eliminated during pregnancy because of their supposed fattening effect upon the child, and the danger of this causing a difficult delivery. Among the most conservative women, pumpkins are placed in the same category with the additional belief that, since their contents are mostly water, they have a weakening effect upon the child.

Sugary foodstuffs such as canes, sweets, sugary tea or coffee are among the things which expectant mothers do not eat. Women believe that these foods produce babies so fat that they put a strain on the mother's strength. For the same reason, the excessive drinking of gruel is prohibited, and hot gruel is especially avoided on the grounds that it would scald the baby. But while these restrictions are adhered to in principle, in actual practice women with a strong liking for forbidden foodstuffs do not refrain from eating them.

A factor of great psychological significance is the belief that Luo mothers begin to yield to the will of their babies long before they are born. Among them are some who, during pregnancy, develop a habit of eating dried meat and other peculiar foodstuffs, one baby causing a mother to eat these and the next turning her appetite against them. These strange habits of eating are attributed to the will of the expected child; and it is believed that the domination of the child over the mother, enduring through the early part of its life, begins in the period of pregnancy.

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843 Dietary restriction may also be a matter of family
•262 habit or taboo. Thus a mother may inform her children
while they are young that a certain kind of food is not to
[753] be eaten by members of their family. This restriction
may result from a fear of spreading certain diseases,
generally skin ailments, latent in that particular family
group. The restriction does not apply to others who are
free from the supposed disease. When a woman gives
birth to a baby her habits in these respects do not
change.

[764] A dietary restriction may also result from the instruc-
tion of a medicine man, as in the case of a woman who
has had no child for a long time. During his treatment
[784] the medicine man gives instruction on taboos and com-
pulsory dietary restrictions. Dislike of a certain food
during pregnancy may also result from personal dis-
agreeable experience. This is also generally assigned to
the will of the child. Restraints of a family origin, as well
as those imposed by the medicine man and acquired
from personal experience, are more strictly adhered to
than the traditional restrictions.

843 *Medicinal restrictions.* The list of medicines that expec-
278 tant mothers may not take is a small one. Apart from
177 the traditional strong purgatives and medicines for kill-
ing worms, modern drugs like quinine and strong Euro-
pean laxatives are eliminated, such measures being
designed to prevent abortion or premature birth.

843 *Social relationship.* Superstitions affecting expectant
[177] mothers have very largely yielded to the influence of
Christianity, but we find remnants of old regulations,
[516] such as those connected with sitting, still observed by
women. An expectant mother is required to sit with a
straight back. Neither should she put one of her legs on
top of another, because it is believed that the expected
child in assuming a similar position would be difficult to

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

Childless marriage. Failure to have a child is a great disaster in the home. The idea of the perpetuation of their kind is so deeply rooted in the minds of the Luo people that a childless marriage generally culminates in the breaking up of the home concerned, the husband usually being advised by his relatives to marry a second wife. Although results may prove that it is the husband who is defective, priority is always given to men to prove their fecundity. Thus a woman is forbidden by the social conventions to attempt to prove on her own initiative that she can give birth to children. §42 [516]

If through the second marriage the husband is proved to be sterile, his wives may one by one desert him. On the other hand, this great desire for children may lead him to carry on his name through the secret offices of the woman's brothers-in-law. Otherwise he must face the inevitable fate of having his family broken up. [516]

Woman's diet after birth. For the first week after childbirth, the mother's food is limited to gruel, fish, and green vegetables. 'Bo', which is one of the vegetable pulses, is excluded on account of the trouble it gives to the stomach. During this early period meat is not eaten because most women complain that it makes the stomach tight. Hard food, such as boiled maize, is also avoided at this time. Although tea and coffee are occasionally drunk by the more fortunate families, the drink which pleases women most at this time is gruel. They are allowed to take a lot of it as people believe that it helps in the formation of the milk which is so important for feeding the new baby. §46 262 [272] [853]

The period of this considered treatment is brief, lasting for about a month at the most. Much depends on the economic resources of the family concerned, and the poorer the family is, the shorter is the time that careful attention can be given.

21:Huxley Q.T-5 (no date) 1960 FL11 Luo FL11
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CHAPTER 6

The Reluctant Luo

1

The Luo are the second largest tribe in Kenya, coming next to the Kikuyu, and at the moment the most influential politically. This is because most Kikuyu politicians went into detention camps at the time of Mau Mau. While Kikuyu cats were away, Luo mice played vigorously, and grabbed the best political cheese. Speaking generally, the Luo are lofty, black-skinned, somewhat ox-like people with prominent teeth, a reputation for making good labourers and a rather slow-witted approach to life.

Needless to say, there are plenty of exceptions. Mr. Tom Mboya is a Luo and, while he has been called many things, 'slow-witted' has never been among them. Their natural food is fish and they are not by nature a cattle people. Their sturdy women smoke pipes with long clay stems. The Luo are not Bantu but Nilotic and their affinities, lingual and tribal, lie more with people in Uganda, such as the Acholi, than with any other Kenya tribes. They are surrounded, however, by Bantu peoples, with whom they share the wide, fertile, steamy and mainly flat basin that surrounds Lake Victoria. Around this basin lie hills from which warrior tribes look down on them, formerly as an eagle looked upon its prey. Far to the south lie the plains of Masai.

People who have dealt with other tribes find the Luo difficult. Their obstinacy is legendary, they are inclined to be sullen and suspicious. The Kikuyu can be all these things, but they are nimble-minded, subtle and, for those they like, have charm. Luo people can be brave and loyal but charm is rarely among their attributes. They are faintly Teutonic, in an African fashion.

So it is not surprising that of all the major Kenya peoples, leaving aside the Masai, the Luo have put up the stiffest